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Wall Street tells Washington:

‘Keep our tax cuts *OR* no benefits for jobless’

By Jerry Goldberg

Some 2 million long-term jobless workers face having their checks cut off in December, unless Congress renews the federal extension of unemployment benefits that expired on Nov. 30.

The number could grow to 4 million by the end of February. Eventually 7 million jobless — including workers whose state unemployment benefits have not yet run out — may lose their benefits. (National Unemployment Law Project, Dec. 4)

There are also another 4 million, called “99ers,” who have already lost or are scheduled to lose their benefits even if a federal extension is passed, as it does not go beyond 99 weeks of unemployment. (Huffington Post, Dec. 3)

As of Dec. 7, the media are reporting that the Obama administration and the Republicans have reached a rotten compromise — a possible extension of benefits in return for keeping the Bush tax cuts for the very rich for at least two more years. There is no guarantee this compromise will be passed, however. And if it does, there will be even more screaming from the right that Social Security and Medicare have to be “reformed” because of the huge deficits in the federal budget — deficits that could be eliminated by taxing the rich and cutting the Pentagon budget.

Even as extended benefits are in risk of being cut off, unemployment in the U.S. is rising. On Dec. 3, the Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the “official” unemployment rate had risen to 9.8 percent, the highest since April. This translates into 15 million workers officially jobless and looking for work. The “official” unemployment rate is 16 percent for African Americans and 13.2 percent for Latinos/as.

Of these 15 million people out of work, 6.3 million — more than a third — have been jobless for six months or longer. The BLS reported that an additional 9 million are working part-time but want full-time work, while another 5.8 million are considered “discouraged workers” and aren’t counted. That brings the jobless rate to 19.2 percent. If you then add in the 9 million workers with part-time jobs who want full-time work, the figure becomes an astounding 24.6 percent.

Meanwhile, corporate profits rose from an annualized rate of $995 billion to $1.66 trillion this last quarter. (Huffington Post, Nov. 23)

Corporations had already been sitting on their profits and refusing to hire. The current rise in unemployment is largely a result of a decline in public sector jobs. For example, in November, while private sector jobs increased by 50,000, local governments, facing growing deficits, cut 14,000 jobs. Analysts generally estimate that 100,000 to 125,000 jobs need to be added each month just to keep the unemployment rate from rising. (New York Times, Dec. 4)

As President Barack Obama’s stimulus funds dry up, the prospect is likely of even greater job losses in the public sector. For example, in 2009, $31 billion of the states’ $110 billion in budget shortfalls were offset by federal stimulus funds. This year, $68 billion of the states’ $191 billion in deficits are being offset by federal stimulus funds. Next year, some $59 billion of the states’ $160 billion in budget shortfalls will be similarly offset. It is projected that in 2012, however, only $6 billion of the states’ estimated $140 billion in deficits will be offset by stimulus funds. (New York Times, Dec. 5)

Local budget deficits are likely to increase even more dramatically as declining home property values manifest themselves in declining tax bases, just as the federal stimulus funds dry up. This will inevitably lead to even greater public sector layoffs and service cuts.

Tax cuts for the very rich

The same day that federal extended unemployment benefits expired, President Barack Obama met with congressional leaders. This critical issue was not even discussed. Instead, the meeting resulted in setting up a committee to continue discussing Republican demands that the Bush tax cuts be extended for the very rich, those making more than $250,000 per year. (New York

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Protest in Baltimore was one of many in U.S. as jobless benefits were set to expire. See article, page 6.
PHOTO: BILL HUGHES

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Protests hit FBI/grand jury harassment

By the staff of FightBack! News
Minneapolis

PHOTO:FIGHTBACK NEWS!/STAFF

Milwaukee Activist Defense Network and Students for a Democratic Society protest on Dec. 3.

About 100 protesters came together outside U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar's office here Dec. 2, in response to news that three Twin Cities anti-war and social justice activists will be getting new orders to appear before a federal grand jury in Chicago. The orders to appear carry the possibility of the activists facing jail time for contempt if they refuse to participate in the politically motivated grand jury proceedings. Those proceedings could put them and their political allies throughout the United States and in other countries at risk of further governmental harassment and violence.

This protest is one of many happening this week, which the Committee to Stop FBI Repression has designated as a week of action in solidarity with the targeted social justice activists.

Speaking to the crowd, Deb Konechne of the Minnesota Committee Against FBI Repression reported on a meeting held with Klobuchar's staff before the protest: "We went to Senator Klobuchar's office to demand that she pressure President Obama and U.S. Attorney General Holder to stop the witch-hunt against anti-war activists and they are refusing to do anything. We are going to turn up the heat."

The three activists who will be receiving new orders to appear before the grand jury in Chicago are Sarah Martin, a member of Women Against Military Madness; Tracy Molm, an organizer with Students for a Democratic Society; and Anh Pham, an anti-war and immigrant rights activist.

Those three are among 14 people who received subpoenas in September during FBI raids on homes and offices in several cities, mostly in the Midwest.

All those who received subpoenas in September stated that they would plead the Fifth Amendment and refuse to testify. The original subpoenas were put on hold after the activists refused to cooperate with the witch-hunt, but the federal attorney running the investigation is now saying that Martin, Molm and Pham will have to appear in front of the grand jury. The FBI claimed the raids and subpoenas are part of an investigation into groups allegedly providing "material support to terrorists."

"The use of these subpoenas represents a new stage of the FBI campaign of interference and harassment against the anti-war movement. This investigation is a direct threat against civil liberties and can only take away our right to speak out against U.S. wars and interventions around the world," said Steff Yorek.

Mick Kelly noted, "The FBI and grand jury investigation of anti-war activists is a major threat to anyone who opposes the policies of the U.S. government."

Thanks to FightBack! News (fightbacknews.org) for permission to reprint this article.

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Stop FBI attacks against anti-war & union activists
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Stop FBI attacks against anti-war & union activists
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WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Protest in New York on Dec. 2 during national week of action to stop FBI repression.

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Spinning exposure of imperialist lies and secrets

Media try to minimize impact of WikiLeaks

By John Catalinotto

Imperialist diplomacy is constructed on lies and secrets. No one is surprised by the secrets. Few are surprised by the lies. Still, a sudden exposure of the lies and secrets can arouse a strong political reaction.

WikiLeaks is a group dedicated simply to releasing state and corporate secrets. Last spring it released a dramatic video exposing some of the daily murderous activity of U.S. helicopters in Iraq. In November WikiLeaks released 251,287 U.S. diplomatic cables to four major corporate media in four imperialist countries. It has also released about a thousand of these cables to the public via the Internet.

Spain's El País, Germany's Der Spiegel, Britain's Guardian and France's Le Monde set up teams to search the cables. The Guardian shared the data with the New York Times, which in turn passed it back to the U.S. government.

A quarter of a million cables is an avalanche of data. To do its reporting, Der Spiegel created a team of 50 people, half researchers and half document experts. Similar teams worked for the other four media, searching for key words and then reading the cables. Most popular organizations not only don't have access to the complete files, they don't have the forces to quickly evaluate all the documents.

These five corporate media outlets are all loyal to imperialism in general and even more loyal to their own ruling classes, which own them and pay their editors. Like the Times, the four in Europe can and do spin the interpretation of the raw cables so as to minimize the damage to the strategic interests of the European Union countries and the U.S. and to harm the interests of states and movements that oppose these imperialist powers.

Thus some of the Times' earliest reporting twisted the information in an attempt to purportedly show the following: China had sharp differences with north Korea and would put pressure on Pyongyang; the kings and other undemocratic leaders of some Arab states were aggressively pushing the U.S. to bomb Iran; and Russia agreed that Iran had obtained rockets capable of reaching Europe.

A closer look shows that the Times often disregarded the facts and used a false interpretation of the cables to promote U.S. policies.

Some key exposures

Whatever crimes might or might not be exposed, it is immediately apparent that the leaks are an enormous embarrassment to the U.S. government and especially its diplomats. Allegedly secret, U.S. data are insecure. This was central to Der Spiegel's coverage on its website on Dec. 6. A large photo showed a concerned Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton with a story entitled, "Washington fights to rebuild shattered reputation."

Regarding information useful to progressive or anti-imperialist forces, the leaks revealed the following:

- The U.S. Embassy in Honduras was fully aware that the June 28, 2009, removal of Honduran President Manuel Zelaya was a military coup, even though the Obama administration refused to define it as such. The false definition allowed the U.S. to continue sending aid to the coup regime and recognize the rigged Honduran election.
- NATO last January agreed to defend the Baltic states and Poland against Russia. "Nine NATO divisions — U.S., British, German and Polish — have been identified for combat operations" should there be war in that region. (Guardian, Dec. 6) But in public NATO called Russia a "partner."
- The cables show the U.S. using its diplomatic corps to spy on both allied and other governments and U.N. officials. This is unsurprising news, but now it is official.
- At the December 2009 climate talks in Copenhagen, according to the Guardian, "Embassy dispatches show [the United States of] America used spying, threats and promises of aid to get support for Copenhagen accord." This accord, which wasn't reached, would have protected the interests of the big U.S.-based energy monopolies.

Exposing the spin weavers

Regarding how the Times spun its coverage of WikiLeaks stories on Iran, the Arab states and Russia, Inter Press Service reporter Gareth Porter, with help from Jim Lobe, wrote an article Dec. 6 showing that the alleged quotes from Arab kings about the U.S. bombing Iran were made in the context of constant pressure from the George W. Bush administration to condemn Iran.

The cables showed that the "Gulf Arab regimes — including Saudi Arabia itself — have been seriously concerned about the consequences of a strike against Iran for their own security, in sharp contrast to Israel's open advocacy of such a strike."

Regarding Russia and Iran, Porter wrote Nov. 30 that the cables showed that "Russian specialists on the Iranian ballistic missile program refuted the U.S. suggestion that Iran has missiles that could target European capitals or intends to develop such a capability." This completely contradicts the way the Times spun the story.

Regarding China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, regardless of what U.S. informants claimed, China has continued to criticize the aggressive maneuvers of the U.S. military with its Japanese and south Korean allies in the region.

All the media outlets that received the full set of WikiLeaks cables gave them their own spin, not always aimed at defending Washington's particular interests, but always loyal to imperialism. El País, for example, which has waged a relentless propaganda war against socialist Cuba, Hugo Chávez of Venezuela and other progressive Latin American leaders, used information in cables from U.S. diplomats to continue to demonize these leaders.

U.S. war against WikiLeaks

On Dec. 7 the founder and main spokesperson for WikiLeaks, Julian Assange, turned himself in to British authorities to answer charges stemming from an alleged sexual incident in Sweden. These same charges, which were made only after Assange became a high-profile critic able to embarrass the U.S. government, had earlier been dropped. However, they reappeared in a European warrant. Assange was refused bail and Sweden is asking for extradition.

This followed a week of government and media demonizing WikiLeaks and Assange, including actual threats of assassination from government officials in Canada and completely unfounded charges in the U.S. that WikiLeaks was a "terrorist" organization.

During that week, a cyber attack on the WikiLeaks website made it unusable. The U.S. also pressured Amazon.com and PayPal to stop doing business with WikiLeaks and got the governments of Iceland, Switzerland and Sweden to join in persecuting Assange and his organization.

By Dec. 7, in response and solidarity — and this is still possible under the current use of the Internet — more than 700 website owners had "mirrored" the WikiLeaks site, meaning they now have sites with the same content as WikiLeaks and are linked to a full file of diplomatic cables. This story is far from over. □

Teach-in slams attacks on Muslims

Demands end to U.S. wars, occupations

By Judy Greenspan
Berkeley, Calif.

More than 200 students and community supporters attended a Bay Area teach-in on Palestine, U.S. wars and Islamophobia on Nov. 30, sponsored by the United National Anti-war Committee, Cal Students for Justice in Palestine, the Muslim Student Alliance at the University of California-Berkeley and the Middle East Children's Alliance. Held on the UC Berkeley campus, the teach-in was one of several anticipated events building toward national anti-war actions called by UNAC for April 9, 2011.

The teach-in was divided into two dynamic, information-packed panels featuring primarily student activists. Members of Students for Justice in Palestine chaired both panels. The first session, "Palestine: the struggle for liberation," gave an historical overview of the division of the Middle East following World War I, the birth of Zionism, and the genocide and displacement of the Palestinian people.

Ziad Abbas, associate director of the Middle East Children's Alliance, put this history into perspective when he noted, "The right of return is the key to peace in the Middle East." Nuha Masri from the Music Students Association spoke about the international campaign for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel and local attempts to win support for BDS on campus.

Hatem Bazian, a UC Berkeley professor and member of American Muslims for Palestine, exposed the dual role of both the U.S. and Israel in whipping up Islamophobia against the people of the Middle East.

Jeff Mackler, a local leader of UNAC, called the "war on terror" another form of Islamophobia and anti-communism. He urged people to get involved in local organizing for the April 9 anti-war mobilizations that will be held on both coasts. Mackler reminded everyone that support for Palestine was voted on at the UNAC founding meeting in Albany, N.Y., and remains an important tenet of the upcoming national demonstration.

The second panel of the evening, "America's wars, Islamophobia and the right to resist," focused on local and international actions in support of Palestine. Dr. Masao Suzuki, a professor and member of the Committee to Stop FBI Repression, talked about the FBI raids and grand jury witch-hunt of anti-war activists in Minneapolis and Chicago. Suzuki himself was visited by the FBI, refused to talk, and has not been subpoenaed before the grand jury. He likened this recent government repression to the 1941 internment of the Japanese people and the use of Cointelpro to attempt to intimidate and destroy Black, Latino/a and Native leaders and organizations in the 1960s and 1970s.

Blanca Missé, a member of the UC Berkeley Student Workers Action Team, linked the fight against budget cuts and for accessible public education with the anti-war struggle. "We have been doing a lot of talking tonight," Missé stated at the end of the evening, "but now it's time to build the fightback." □

"In this period of economic uncertainty, Fred Goldstein's ***Low-Wage Capitalism*** could not be better timed. Beautifully written, deeply considered and backed by impressive research, this is essential reading for anyone wishing to understand the true nature of the world we live in and the factors that have led to so much turmoil. … Urgently recommended."

Gregory Elich,
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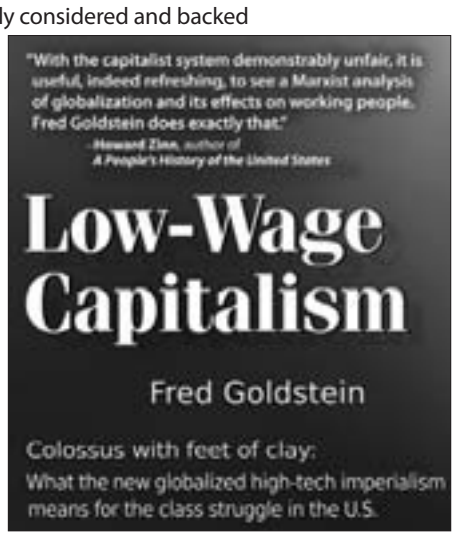
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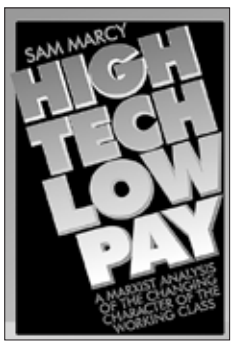


Twenty years ago Sam Marcy wrote that the scientific-technological revolution is accelerating a shift to lower-paying jobs and to more women, Black and Latino/a workers. Using Marxism as a living tool he analyzes the trends and offers strategies for labor including the occupation of plants.

A new introduction by Fred Goldstein explains the roots of the current economic crisis, with its disastrous unemployment, that has heightened the need for a working-class resurgence.

Books available at **Leftbooks.com** and bookstores across the country.

CUNY students demand:

‘No tuition hikes! No budget cuts!’

By Larry Hales
New York

CUNY students disrupt Board of Trustees’ meeting that voted for tuition increases on Nov. 22.

PHOTO: CITY COLLEGE ACTIVIST

Students and faculty at the City University of New York, in opposition to another tuition increase, held two disruptions at meetings of the Board of Trustees in November. The board had proposed a 5 percent tuition increase, which would amount to $125 more per semester, to begin in the spring of 2011. On top of that, the BOT proposed an additional increase of $500 per semester for the Hunter College School of Social Work. CUNY tuition had already been raised by 15 percent in 2009. Since 2003, tuition has increased 44 percent.

The first disruption took place at a board public hearing on Nov. 5. The hearings are obligatory, but students don’t generally attend in large numbers. Students and faculty organized a press conference and protest outside the hearing to express their anger. Many noted that the information about the hearing had only been released a few days prior because the BOT had no interest in inviting criticism.

There was much security, and protesters were let into the hearing a few at a time. After many BOT policy supporters were let in, a CUNY security guard told the protesters that the room was filled to capacity. However, a student inside the hearing sent information that the room was not filled, that maximum occupancy was more than double the number of people in the room.

Once inside, the students and faculty cheered the testimony of people pointing out the hardships that another increase would cause. A faculty member noted that CUNY was free from 1847 to 1976. There was jeering at tuition supporters; the room erupted in chants of, “Whose school? Our school!” and “No tuition hikes, no budget cuts!” In the middle of the meeting, CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein walked out and refused to return. His walkout drew scorn; many shouted at the board and refused to settle down when so instructed by security and board members.

A student from the CUNY Graduate Center pointed out that the unelected BOT is a board of multimillionaires who attended CUNY when it was free.

On Nov. 22 the BOT had a public meeting at Baruch College to hear Chancellor Goldstein remark on the state of CUNY and to hold a vote on the items discussed at the public hearing.

Organizers had put out a call for a protest both outside and inside the meeting. Students and faculty came from all over the CUNY system to protest, representing Hostos, Bronx, Lehman, City College of New York, Hunter, Baruch, Brooklyn, Borough of Manhattan, John Jay, Queens and LaGuardia.

A speak-out outside the college lasted for 30 minutes before participants entered Baruch, having to go through turnstiles and a metal detector just to enter the building. There were police outside and many security guards working for the New York Police Department.

Once inside, students and faculty sat through the BOT procedure, but after the Chancellor’s address, many began chanting, “They say cut back, we say fight back!” “Sham board, sham vote” and other militant chants. As many as 50 students participated in the disruption, which continued as security began forcibly ejecting participants from the room.

Once many of the students and faculty were in the hall, the remaining protesters led a walkout to show that the BOT had already made its decision and that, because the board is unelected, the BOT processes are not legitimate.

As security forced protesters into elevators, the disruption continued in the hall with chants that drew students out of classrooms. Two people were detained and given summonses to appear in court.

When the protesters got downstairs, another protest was held in the lobby of the vertical campus. As many as 70 people took over the lobby. Baruch students participated from a balcony, cheering and chanting. Security surrounded the protesters, encircled them and violently pushed them out of the building before locking all exits. Only Baruch students with valid Baruch identification were allowed to enter through one opening.

A final speak-out was held outside before the night ended. Someone who stayed inside for the vote said the BOT voted unanimously for the tuition increase.

However, the tuition increase was amended before the final vote. A 2 percent increase was added for the fall, and the chancellor introduced another 3 percent increase to be added at his discretion. Normally the New York state legislature would have to vote on a proposed tuition increase, but the board was given the go-ahead to impose a tuition increase when the last state budget was passed.

The increases represent another attack against working people and their families. The fact that the board is made up of multimillionaires like Kathleen Pesile — former vice president for J.P. Morgan — shows clearly that these attacks are class warfare. Chancellor Goldstein makes more than $500,000 a year and received a $45,000 raise last year. The average adjunct faculty member makes $15,000 a year.

The CUNY system was once deemed necessary to educate workers, but with the scientific technological revolution, imperialist globalization and pitting workers around the world to compete for jobs, the ruling class doesn’t need as educated a workforce here as before. The social wage — of which education is a part — is being eroded as the wealthy and super-wealthy seek to steal public money to line their pockets. Cutting public funding for higher education and replacing it with tuition increases is a part of this erosion.

The actions of students and workers in education, not just in New York but throughout the country, are crucial. Going into next year, when the cuts are expected to be even sharper, determined action is needed to stop the attacks on public education and to fight attacks on the public sector in general. □

Packed meeting hears report on women’s conference

The New York chapter of the Women’s Fightback Network hosted a reportback meeting Dec. 4 on the Montreal International Women’s Conference that took place Aug. 13-16 in Canada. The meeting, held at the Solidarity Center in Manhattan, was standing room only as women activists of many nationalities, ages and political backgrounds saw video footage and a power point presentation about the conference.

One of the most important achievements of the Montreal conference was establishing an International Women’s Alliance, based on a global anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist perspective. A Basis of Unity statement will be debated and ratified at the first general assembly meeting of the IWA to be held in the Philippines in July 2011. For further information, go to www.micw2010.org. The WFN helped to organize a U.S. delegation to the conference. Other delegations came from countries in Asia, Latin America, Europe and Canada.

A few of the women who participated in Dec. 4 meeting.

PHOTO: WOMEN’S FIGHTBACK NETWORK

The Dec. 4 meeting heard a number of talks on issues and struggles at home and abroad impacting the lives of women, their children and their communities. Some of these issues included homelessness, layoffs, unemployment, incarceration, education, anti-LGBTQ oppression, immigrant rights, Philippines, Korea, Palestine, Haiti, Honduras and more. There was also a report motivating a mobilization for International Working Women’s Day 2011. Following the meeting, a dinner was prepared by male supporters of the WFN. The next meeting of the WFN will be held Jan. 8. For more information, email wfnetwork-ny@gmail.com.

— Monica Moorehead

The $3.3 trillion cover-up

By Stephen Millies

Just one day after 2 million people were cut off from extended unemployment benefits, the Federal Reserve Bank was finally forced on Dec. 1 to reveal who had received $3.3 trillion from its "emergency lending" programs.

Not a single penny of this "emergency lending" has gone to the unemployed — even though $3.3 trillion is enough to lend $10,645 to every person in the United States. No one facing eviction or foreclosure was bailed out.

Instead, this money was lent to the biggest banks in the world. That's capitalism for you.

Citibank reached into the Federal Reserve's cookie jar at least 174 times. (New York Times, Dec. 2) Citibank deserved nothing. This $2 trillion octopus has been draining Latin America of its wealth for over a century. Mexico had to pay $1 billion in interest every month to foreign banks during the late 1980s.

Barclays Bank and Barclays Capital got 188 loans totaling $829 billion. (See who got what at graphicsweb.wsj.com/php/Federal-Loan-Data-Disclosure.html.)

According to "Capitalism and Slavery" by Eric Williams — the first prime minister of independent Trinidad and Tobago — Barclays was jumpstarted by the slave trade. Barclays ought to be paying reparations, not collecting easy loans with interest rates as low as one-tenth of a percentage point.

From the day it was set up by slave masters and merchants, the U.S. government has been giving handouts to the wealthy. Chicago's Continental Illinois Bank was given a $4.5 billion transfusion in 1984.

But when Harlem's Freedom National Bank was failing in 1990, Federal Reserve Chair Alan Greenspan didn't lift a finger to save it. Jackie Robinson, who broke the color line in baseball, had helped establish Freedom National in 1964. A mere $6 million could have rescued it, but Jackie Robinson's bank was forced to close on Nov. 9, 1990.

Workers need a new WPA

Current Federal Reserve Chair Ben Bernanke only disclosed these 21,000 transactions on Dec. 1 because of a law sponsored by Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders.

Why had the Fed kept these trillions a secret?

Every cent of this loot was produced by the working class. Much of it had been stolen from super-exploited workers in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Bernanke and other capitalist economists claim the Federal Reserve's giveaway program "prevented another Great Depression."

Well, for the 30 million people who still don't have a job — or who can only get part-time work but need full-time — it's already a "Great Depression."

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 46.5 percent of Black teenagers were jobless in November. The real figure was far higher.

The vast sums of money thrown around by the Federal Reserve shows it's possible to establish a massive jobs program, like the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s.

The WPA employed 8 million people. As a percentage of the country's population at the time, that's equal to hiring 19 million people today.

President Franklin Roosevelt only started the WPA because there was an upsurge of the working class. This U.S. jobs program was established against the political backdrop of the five-year economic plans begun in the Soviet Union that had eliminated unemployment by 1930.

Investigate the Fed

The Federal Reserve's bail-out-the-rich program remains murky and complex. Initials like PDCF, TAF, TSLF, AMLF and TALF are used to denote the various schemes. For poor and working people, all these programs are spelled RIP-OFF, STEAL or ROBBERY.

The entire record of the Federal Reserve during this crisis is outrageous. Speculators who run hedge funds got $71 billion. Some investors made profits as high as 48 percent. (Wall Street Journal, Dec. 2)

Yet there isn't any money for Francisco Felix, a 32-year-old father of four, to get a liver transplant. The state of Arizona, which passed the racist immigration law SB 1070, now refuses to pay for organ transplants, condemning Felix and other poor people to slow and painful deaths. Even though it's been economically blockaded by the U.S. for 50 years, socialist Cuba provides free medical care for everyone.

In 2008 General Electric got a $16.1 billion loan, while $3 billion was bestowed on JPMorgan Chase. The rub was that GE CEO Jeffery Immelt and JPMorgan CEO Jamie Dimon were on the nine-member board of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. (New York Times, Dec. 5)

That's a no-no, even according to the capitalists' own laws. Don't bet on Congress investigating this scandal. It's too busy witch-hunting Charles Rangel, Maxine Waters and other Black members of Congress.

Different descriptions have been given of the amounts provided by the Fed. The Wall Street Journal mentions "$3.3 trillion in loans made to financial firms, companies and foreign central banks." (Dec. 1)

But according to the New York Times, "the Fed extended a cumulative total of nearly $9 trillion in short-term loans to 18 financial institutions." (Dec. 2) Morgan Stanley got a one-night loan of $61 billion.

Poor and working people need short-term loans, too. Payday lenders who offer two-week loans charge at least 15 percent interest. That's a minimum annual rate of 390 percent. This kind of loan sharking has been made illegal in Maryland, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and seven other states. But it goes on full-steam in the rest of the country. □

Dockworkers march for Del Monte boycott

By Joseph Piette
Philadelphia

Led by the 3-year-old daughter of a laid-off longshore worker whose sign read "Del Monte ruined my Christmas," more than 400 dockworkers and community and labor allies marched in the busy noontime streets around City Hall here on Nov. 22. They were protesting the layoffs of more than 200 members of the International Longshoremen's Association Local 1291 due to the decision by Fresh Del Monte Products to dock its incoming ships at a below-union-wage pier in Gloucester City, N.J.

The workers also entered and took over a Wawa supermarket, dramatizing the union's call for a boycott of Del Monte, a major supplier of fresh fruit to supermarket chains around the U.S. Wawa is a major seller of Del Monte fruit in the Delaware Valley area. Fresh Del Monte Produce is not affiliated with Del Monte Foods Co., which sells packaged food products.

Support actions on the National Day of Action also took place as far away as Galveston, Texas, and Coral Gables, Fla. Denver City Councilmember Paul Lopez met a union delegation outside city hall in 28-degree weather and stated: "It's a cold day and a cold night, but this is an action of solidarity. We are here because what Del Monte is doing is undermining the fundamental pillars of the work force in America. They are taking us back to the 1920s." (ilwu46.com, Dec. 4)

At the New York and New Jersey ports, 3,600 workers refused to allow the unloading of at least two dozen ships in late September, the first strike there since 1977. Trucks filled with goods to be exported were left standing at the gates.

"We're worried that it'll be like a cancer," said Anthony Velardo, a union member at Port Newark who operates machinery that takes the containers off the ships and loads them into waiting trucks. "It'll start small and then grow, and what happened in Philly can happen here and all our jobs could go somewhere else." (Associated Press, Sept. 29)

Local 1291 was further supported in Baltimore, where 1,000 members closed their port Nov. 29. According to John Blom, an ILA Local 333 member, "People are using their conscience. If we don't stick together, we'll fall together."

Philadelphia ILA members tossed Del Monte pineapples into the Delaware River during the Labor Day Parade in September, announcing the boycott campaign against Del Monte, one of the world's largest food brands.

Del Monte anti-union worldwide

In a document calling for the boycott, the ILA writes: "On July 22, Del Monte issued an outrageous demand that $5 million in labor cost reductions and $25 million in infrastructure improvements be met by the State of New Jersey in just four days! The ILA agreed to meet these shocking demands, conceding to wage cuts and benefit reductions regardless of the fact that they had not received a wage increase for almost 20 years, hoping that if they did, Del Monte's imports would continue to arrive at the ILA's pier.

"Despite the ILA's willingness to work with Del Monte, the company still elected to move its business on Oct. 1 away from the unionized pier, notwithstanding the fact that Del Monte's net profit for 2009 was $144 million. Needless to say, the economy is not hurting this giant corporation and there is no financial need for the company to resort to lower wages for its workers."

Dionysios Christou, a spokesperson for Coral Gables, Fla.-based Del Monte Fresh Produce, argued on Sept. 28 that the "Gloucester Terminals LLC is fully unionized." (ABC News, Sept. 29) ILA Local 1291 Business Manager Boise Butler replied: "Dock Workers Local 1 is a sham union. They pay their unqualified workers slave wages and little or no benefits. ... The Gloucester Terminal is operated by the Holts, who provide office space to Local 1." (Philadelphia Public Record, Sept. 29)

Del Monte advertised for supervisory jobs at its facility in Gloucester, N.J., on Craigslist.org in September, offering salaries ranging from $8.50 to $10 per hour. At the ILA port, union members make anywhere from $17 to $24.50 per hour.

In a 2008 report entitled "The Sour Taste of Pineapple," the International Labor Rights Forum investigated conditions for Del Monte's workers. Its findings concluded that "freedom of association and right to collective bargaining have been blatantly violated in [Del Monte's plantations in] Costa Rica. ... Union leaders have been systematically fired and laid off to obliterate any union presence in pineapple production.

"This is particularly true in Costa Rica, where companies install 'Permanent Committees,' or company-selected worker representatives to replace union leaders. ... Less than 2 percent of workers in Costa Rica are currently unionized and as a result major anti-union actions have been carried out by companies while governments remain complicit."

The report continues: "The abuses can also be attributed to more systematic factors surrounding the international agricultural supply chains. Multinational companies that buy and distribute pineapples are pressured into reducing costs to be able to compete for a place on the supermarket shelf.

"Since input costs such as fertilizers and gas are often fixed or rising, supplier companies such as Dole and Del Monte will often seek to maximize profits by minimizing their labor costs. Labor costs only account for a small percentage of the total selling price of the pineapples. Nevertheless, these companies consistently take advantage of high unemployment, migrant workers and weak labor standards in impoverished regions like Central America and Southeast Asia."

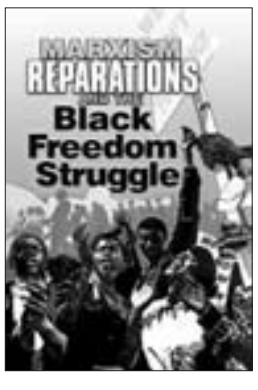
Del Monte's aggressive action at Philadelphia's port is a continuation of its anti-labor policies worldwide, brought home to the U.S. during the most serious recession since the 1930s.

The fightback answer, of course, is solidarity. Boycott Del Monte! □

MARXISM, REPARATIONS
and the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper.
Edited by Monica Moorehead.

• Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination Larry Holmes • **Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery** Sam Marcy • **Black Youth: Repression & Resistance** LeiLani Dowell • **The Struggle for Socialism Is Key** Monica Moorehead • **Black & Brown Unity: A Pillar of Struggle for Human Rights & Global Justice!** Saladin Muhammad • **Alabama's Black Belt: Legacy of Slavery, Sharecropping & Segregation** Consuela Lee **Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior** Mumia Abu-Jamal • **Are Conditions Ripe Again Today? 40th Anniversary of the 1965 Watts Rebellion** John Parker • **Racism and Poverty in the Delta** Larry Hales • **Haiti Needs Reparations, Not Sanctions** Pat Chin



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Protests over jobs become more desperate

Anxiety over the possibility of losing their unemployment benefits and anger over companies refusing to hire even as they make record profits are driving more and more workers into the streets.

Across the country, demonstrations were held the last week of November and early December demanding no cuts in benefits plus government action to create jobs. Below are reports from three of these protests, in Baltimore, Detroit and New York.

Baltimore

'Jobs, not evictions and utility shutoffs'

Angry unemployed workers and their supporters gathered in front of the downtown Baltimore unemployment office on Nov. 29 to demand an extension of unemployment benefits and a jobs program. Unemployment is very high in this city — officially more than 14 percent with almost half of young Black workers jobless.

The protesters were also asking for emergency action to keep people from being thrown out on the streets or left to freeze in their apartments without heat, hot water or lights. Their demands included a moratorium on foreclosures, evictions and utility shutoffs. The protest was called by the A Job Is a Right Campaign and the Ujima Peoples Progress Party.

— Sharon Black

Detroit

'Fight, don't starve'

Unemployed workers about to lose their meager income were among those who demonstrated here on Dec. 2 outside the State of Michigan building to demand an extension of unemployment benefits and other relief. The protest was called by the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs.

"Extend unemployment benefits! Fight, don't starve!" chanted the noisy protesters, who marched in a picket line despite wind and cold weather.

Coalition spokesperson Derek Grigsby, a laid-off City of Detroit worker, talked to the news media about the impending cutoff of his own unemployment benefits. "It's tough," said Grigsby. "We want an extension of benefits, yes, but we also think workers should be guaranteed an income as long as unemployment remains high and they need a job. It's time for a federal public jobs program to get people back to work."

Demonstrators marched inside the building chanting loudly as more than 100 people sat in the unemployment office waiting room. Security officials made the protesters leave, but their message of fightback was still heard loud and clear by the unemployed workers there.

WW PHOTO: ABAYOMI AZIKIWE

Some 162,000 workers in Michigan exhausted their jobless benefits from January through November of this year, according to a Nov. 22 statement issued by the Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency. Unless Congress approves an extension of federal benefits soon, 181,500 more workers in Michigan will be cut off from December through April 2011. Extended benefits expired on Nov. 30.

A coalition leaflet stated: "The cutoff of unemployment benefits is already leading to massive foreclosures, evictions and utility shutoffs as winter is upon us. While the state has received $500 million in federal funds to keep the unemployed in their homes, the major banks have refused to participate in the Helping Hardest Hit Homeowners Program, and the state has failed to develop a plan for implementation despite announcing the program last July. Fewer than 200 unemployed workers have received the aid they were promised. With the cutoff of unemployment benefits, those in the most dire need of help will become ineligible."

Protesters demanded lame-duck Gov. Jennifer Granholm declare a state of economic emergency in Michigan and use her executive authority to impose an immediate moratorium to halt foreclosures, evictions and utility shutoffs while the government is figuring out how to ensure the survival of hundreds of thousands of Michiganders.

Even with just a few weeks remaining in her last term, however, Granholm still refuses to display the political courage necessary to help the people.

— Kris Hamel

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

New York

'Ho, ho, ho – Jobs, not war'

As a crew at Rockefeller Center prepared for the annual tree-lighting ceremony there by decorating an 84-foot-tall Norway spruce on Nov. 30, a group of about 40 people brought a different message to the holiday season in New York: "Keep the lights on for the unemployed," read their banner.

The protest was reminding New Yorkers that about 95,000 city dwellers and 200,000 people statewide were in danger of losing their long-term unemployment benefits, some starting the next day. The demonstration also included signs reading "Jobs not war!" and "We need jobs, not another Korean War." The protest was sponsored by Flashmobs4jobs and the International Action Center.

— John Catalinotto

Coalition targets Chase banks

By Workers World Detroit Bureau

Members of the People Before Banks Coalition here simultaneously targeted dozens of Chase Bank branches on Dec. 3. Fanning out throughout metro Detroit, a diverse assemblage of union members, community people, students and other activists gathered at targeted Chase branches during lunchtime to leaflet and petition.

According to William Bryce, a staff organizer with Southeastern Michigan Jobs with Justice and a central organizer of the People Before Banks Coalition, those leafleting reported a tremendously supportive response from Chase Bank customers and the general community. Those leafleting and petitioning were encouraged to continue the Chase campaign.

People Before Banks is asking people to sign a pledge to remove all their money from Chase and/or cancel their Chase credit or debit cards.

The coalition is organizing a mass leafleting campaign demanding that Chase Bank impose a two-year moratorium on home foreclosures and that the financial institution stop bankrolling R.J. Reynolds Co., which is denying rights and decent working conditions to migrant farmworkers in North Carolina's tobacco fields. The Dec. 3 actions were part of this campaign. The coalition grew out of the U.S. Social Forum held in June when more than 1,000 people marched on Chase Bank in Detroit.

For more information, phone 734-652-6382 or 402-689-8878; email peoplebeforebanks@gmail.com; or visit www.supportfloc.org or www.moratorium-mi.org.

Jobs crisis grows even as benefits expire

Continued from page 1

Times, Nov. 30)

Even if a deal is struck to extend federal unemployment benefits in exchange for continuing the property tax cuts for the rich, a deal that President Obama apparently has already agreed to, Republican leaders are insisting that the approximately $60 billion one-year cost of extended unemployment benefits be paid for by cutting other desperately needed social programs. But they don't insist on similar cuts to offset the $700 billion 10-year cost of extending tax cuts for the rich. (Huffington Post, Dec. 4)

The workers and poor will be forced to pay for their benefits (if the extension is passed), while the rich get a free ride. Rationing of basic services — such as the state of Arizona's recent decision to eliminate Medicaid funding for life-saving liver, lung, heart, pancreas and bone marrow transplants — will become the rule.

The Federal Reserve has distributed $3.3 trillion in relief to huge corporations and financial institutions since January 2009. Included in that amount was $1.1 trillion in mortgage securities on at-risk mortgages held by Morgan Stanley, Citigroup, Merrill Lynch, J.P. Morgan, Deutsche Bank, Barclays and other major financial institutions. Significantly, that $1.1 trillion was only on mortgages backed up by the federal government, meaning these transnational banks had their bad loans taken over by the taxpayers.

'Fight, don't starve!'

The one-sided class war being waged by the capitalists, which totally disregards the well-being of the workers and poor while funneling more and more of our funds to the corporations and rich, must be answered. As demonstrators chanted at a demonstration in Detroit on Dec. 2, it's time for the workers to "Fight, don't starve."

The working class must hit the streets with its own program. A job or income now is every worker's right. Tte government must bail out the people, not the banks. We need a political struggle to demand a massive WPA-type jobs program to rebuild our communities.

The government must order the corporations to spend their $1.66 trillion in profits stolen from the labor of the working class to put people to work through a shorter workweek, 30 hours work for 40 hours pay, and an executive order implementing a moratorium on foreclosures, evictions and utility shutoffs so people can survive the current crisis.

We need to revive the fight for socialism to replace the capitalist system, whose decadence and decay is manifesting itself daily with every new attack on the workers and oppressed. □

There's an answer to

Millions of homeless, millions of empty homes

By Jaimeson Champion

As the cold winter chill sets in across the U.S., homelessness is at an all-time high.

Over the past few years, millions of people have been forced from their homes by foreclosures and evictions and into overcrowded shelters and transitional housing. The number of homeless families rose by close to 30 percent between 2007 and 2009. (hud.gov)

With layoffs continuing in nearly all industries, tens of millions more families and individuals are living with oppressive anxiety caused by not knowing if they will be able to make next month's rent or mortgage payment.

Recently, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, which includes a multitude of government agencies, ranging from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to the Department of Defense, unveiled a plan called Opening Doors. It has been billed as the "first ever federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness" and claims to be "centered on the belief that no one should experience homelessness — no one should be without a safe, stable place to call home."

Nice words. The federal strategic plan to end homelessness is more than 70 pages of charts, graphs and statistics. (usich.gov) But noticeably absent from all the analysis is the one economic statistic that shows there can be an immediate, commonsense solution: the housing vacancy rate.

According to the Census Department, there are more than 18.9 million vacant housing units in the U.S. (census.gov)

That's enough perfectly usable housing units to put a roof over the head of every single homeless person in the U.S., with millions of homes to spare. If it is true that "it is simply unacceptable for individuals, children, families and our veterans to be faced with homelessness in this country," as President Barack Obama writes in the preface to Opening Doors, then how can rising homelessness in the middle of 18.9 million vacant homes be explained?

The paradox of plenty

The barrier between the homeless and the millions of empty homes is capitalism and capitalist property relations. In capitalist society, property rights are protected by law while human rights — like the right to food, shelter and a job — are not. During a capitalist economic crisis, when millions can't find jobs, are losing their homes and are going hungry, the absurdity and cruelty of this system become glaringly obvious.

Throughout most of human history the chief economic problems have been rooted in scarcity and the hoarding of scarce resources by one segment of society at the expense of another.

The rise of capitalism and the dawn of the industrial revolution, however, which enormously expanded productivity, brought about an absurd new type of economic problem. In the early 1800s the French philosopher Charles Fourier was perhaps the first to describe this new problem when he reported on commercial markets becoming glutted with more products than could be afforded by the populace. He termed this phenomenon a "crise plethorique," or a crisis of abundance.

What Fourier was seeing was the inherent law of capitalist overproduction in action. Two generations later, Karl Marx laid bare the inner workings of this system in his monumental work "Capital."

Sacramento, Calif.

Under capitalism, each capitalist firm is compelled, by competition with rival firms, to produce the maximum amount of goods by exploiting the maximum amount of labor so as to gain the maximum amount of power and profit and thus avoid being overtaken by competitors. Because there is no coordination between rival firms regarding the limits of the market, there inevitably comes a point when the amount of goods produced exceeds the amount the workers can afford to buy.

When supply outpaces demand in this manner, markets become glutted and capitalists' profits fall. Workers are laid off in large numbers as the glut lessens the capitalists' need for their labor power. Unemployed workers are less able to consume, thus exacerbating the general crisis of overproduction

A look back at the U.S. housing market over the past decade reveals this process.

From 2000 to 2006, home construction surged to record highs as firms in all areas of the housing sector, from construction companies to appliance makers, upped production and profited handsomely. But there eventually came a point when the surge in home construction outpaced the ability of workers in general to afford the housing units being produced.

By late 2006 the housing market was glutted with more units than could be sold at a profit and layoffs began across all areas of the housing trades. Housing prices fell as the glut set in, exposing the big banks and institutional investors to massive losses on the projects they had bankrolled through a host of securities and loans.

Dallas, Texas, street sign.

The ensuing financial meltdown led to more layoffs, foreclosures and evictions, and the downward spiral intensified. As 2010 draws to a close, millions of workers and their families are unemployed and homeless — while millions of homes and apartments sit vacant and the bankers and bosses sit back and count their bailout money.

The socialist solution

Simply put, capitalism is the root cause of unemployment and rising homelessness in recent years. And capitalist property relations are the sole reason why millions of perfectly good homes sit vacant while working class families crowd into already packed shelters and tent cities or freeze out on the street or in their cars.

The solution to the growing homelessness epidemic will not be found in government-produced charts and graphs. The solution can only be achieved through the struggle of the workers themselves.

Workers can, through militant action, force some reforms to ease their plight, like a government jobs plan and a moratorium on foreclosures and evictions. But ultimately, the struggle must be to abolish capitalism and replace it with socialism.

Under socialism, when the working class takes over the vast means of production it has created and liberates the factories, the mines, and so on to be used for the good of all, the anarchy of capitalist production for profit will be abolished. Production will be planned and the "bottom line" will be to satisfy human needs.

Through the development of socialism, the absurd calamity of rising homelessness amidst a sea of empty homes will be a thing of the past and the doors to human progress can truly be opened. □

'Sorry, no blood money today'

By Caleb T. Maupin
Cleveland

It was early Friday afternoon. I went down to the west side of Cleveland to sell my blood plasma like I often do. Because winter is gradually setting in and the holidays are approaching, there was a bigger crowd than usual.

Each corner of the waiting room was full of people. It was standing room only, as we waited one by one to stick our thumbs in a computer scanner. As usual, we each filled out a questionnaire on the computer screen, clicking "yes" and "no" to health questions. Just a few months ago, someone got paid to ask us these questions. Not anymore, though; computers are much cheaper.

There were probably several hundred of us packed into the little facility. We were Black and white, young and old. There were moms taking turns watching each other's children while they had their veins pumped.

We sat in the waiting room, some of us leaning against the walls, others just standing. Somebody's cell phone rang or vibrated practically every minute. We breathed and coughed on each other. We were packed in tight. We waited until they said our name over the loudspeaker. Then they extract our blood plasma and give us "compensation" for our "donation."

Suddenly, a woman who works at the clinic appeared in the middle of the crowded waiting room. She was distinguished by her long white coat. "If you already signed up, it's going to be two more hours," she announced. There are groans.

We were all there because we need the money. The first five times, they reward you with $50. After that, it's $20, and another $35 if you provide plasma later in the same week.

The compensation you receive for your donation no longer comes in cash. Instead, it gets put on a debit card. For every transaction on the debit card, the credit card company gets 25 cents. It's a fee for the credit card company for performing a service we do not want.

I sometimes think about the executives who own the credit card company. They get at least 25 cents for my plasma. But they don't bleed for it. They just scrape it off the top, from the money I bled for. Even though I'm not selling my labor or my time, they still find a way to get "surplus value" from my blood.

When they changed the policy to giving cards instead of cash, they pretended it was a good thing. "Now you can order books or DVDs online from your donations," the poster said. I had to laugh. None of us in the waiting room was there because we wanted a new copy of Harry Potter.

We seemed to have just gotten over having to wait another two hours when the woman came back. This time she had a cop with her.

'How will we eat tonight?'

She looked at the cop, who opened his jacket and revealed his uniform and gun holster underneath his winter coat.

"The freezer is broken," he announced. "This place is closed for the day. You all need to leave."

There was anger, expressed as swearing and fuming.

"You could at least compensate us for our time!" somebody shouted.

"We don't buy time; we buy plasma," the woman in the white coat said, seemingly frustrated to have to argue the point. "It's not our fault. The government says we have to keep blood in the freezer."

We pour out of the lobby into the cold. We're all frustrated for the same reason. Between our angry thoughts, we're recalculating how to eat dinner tonight, pay our rent, put gas in our cars and deal with other basic things.

We pour out to the bus stop, and the bus fills up. There are hundreds of us — way too many for one city bus. Another bus comes in 15 minutes and takes another load. Then another bus, then another.

We, the human cattle, are transported away.

Soon the parking lot is closed, and the cop is locking the door. Just a few people stand outside the door smoking cigarettes.

As I waited for my ride, I thought about things. I wondered if the reason they stopped handing out cash and have an armed cop around is for days like this. I wonder if they realize some day people might not go home when the place is "closed." We might refuse to leave until we get the money that not just us but so many others bleed for.

Will one armed cop be enough?

Maupin is an unemployed youth activist.

WikiLeaks and Africa

U.S. frustrated with allies & adversaries

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Documents released by the WikiLeaks website under the direction of Australian national Julian Assange provide insight into U.S. political maneuvers on the African continent. Although more attention was paid to diplomatic cables on events in Saudi Arabia, Britain, Iran, etc., there are significant leaks related to the frustrations of the U.S. State Department in influencing developments in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Morocco and Algeria.

Going back 20 years, the U.S. Embassy in Pretoria, under the former racist minority apartheid regime, sought to make direct contact with African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela upon his release from prison in 1990. Mandela was let out of prison after 27 years in response to a worldwide movement in support of the South African masses' struggle for national liberation.

According to leaked cables published in the South African Mail & Guardian on Nov. 29, "It took seven weeks of steady hounding to obtain an appointment for [U.S.] ambassador [William Lacy] Swing with Mandela." In addition to the slow pace of scheduling a U.S. meeting with the world-renowned South African former political prisoner, there were also leading elements in the African National Congress at the time who believed "Mandela should refrain from meeting UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher."

The U.S. had been instrumental in the capture and imprisonment of Nelson Mandela in 1962, when he sought to organize both mass and armed struggles aimed at toppling the racist political system in South Africa. Only after millions within South Africa and around the world rallied to the ANC banner was the U.S. forced to recognize this leading national liberation movement.

After visiting neighboring African states and other fraternal countries in the immediate aftermath of his release, Mandela toured the U.S. in June 1990. During the visit he repeatedly refused to renounce the ANC's longtime friendship with allies in the Palestine Liberation Organization, Libya, Cuba and other revolutionary states and liberation movements.

U.S. frustrated in Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, which gained independence from Britain in 1980, the ruling ZANU-PF party embarked upon a radical land redistribution program in 2000. The program prompted the U.S., Britain, the European Union and its allies to impose still-existing sanctions against the government of President Robert Mugabe.

The U.S. and its allies provided political and economic support to the Western-oriented Movement for Democratic Change, trying to topple the ZANU-PF government. However, former U.S. Ambassador to Zimbabwe Christopher Dell expressed frustration at the incapacity of MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai to carry out the imperialist agenda inside this southern African state.

Within documents related to the MDC, Dell claimed there was no competent opposition to the Mugabe government. In a cable entitled "The End is Nigh," written July 13, 2007, Dell stated that "Zimbabwe's opposition is far from ideal and I leave convinced that had we had different partners, we could have achieved more already." (Zimbabwe Herald, Nov. 30)

Dell stated regime change would have been possible with more "talent" among the opposition forces. He claimed, "You have to play the hand you're dealt."

The U.S. ambassador, extremely unpopular in Zimbabwe during his tenure, which ended in 2007, also noted Tsvangirai was a "flawed figure and not readily open to advice, indecisive and with questionable judgment in selecting those around him.

"He is the indispensable element for opposition success, but possibly an albatross around their necks once in power. In short, he is a kind of Lech Walesa character: Zimbabwe needs him, but should not rely on his executive abilities to lead the country's recovery."

U.S. attitude toward 'friendly states'

The U.S., while attempting to influence and redirect developments in states like Zimbabwe and within the African National Congress, which it viewed as communist-influenced national liberation movements and governments, also disparaged long-time allies. Thus, the regimes in Kenya did not escape scathing attacks by the world's leading imperialist country. WikiLeaks released 1,821 diplomatic cables on Kenyan relations between 1996 and 2010, indicating clearly that the U.S. did not have high opinions of one of its closest collaborators in East Africa.

After the eruption of intraparty violence in Kenya in late 2007 and early 2008, stemming from a disputed election, several leading states and political leaders on behalf of the African Union worked for months to end the violence and establish a unity government. Nonetheless, according to the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, "almost every single sentence from the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi speaks with disdain of the coalition government." (Dec. 1)

In the North African kingdom of Morocco, another close U.S. ally in the so-called "war on terrorism," leaked diplomatic cables show little trust in the armed forces of this country. The U.S. assessment was that the Moroccan military was plagued by corruption "at the highest levels." (Afrol News, Dec. 3)

One cable told Washington that Gen. Abdelaziz Bennani, commander of the Moroccan armed forces, used his position "to skim money from military contracts and influence business decisions." U.S. Ambassador Thomas Riley also claimed that he discovered credible rumors that Bennani "owns large parts of the fisheries in Western Sahara."

The Western Sahara, a former Spanish colony controlled by Morocco since 1976, has waged a national independence struggle since the early 1970s. Riley noted that to win countries over to opposing the independence of the Western Sahara, whose liberation movement, the Polisario Front, had won the right to hold a yet-to-be-realized national referendum on independence, Morocco willingly participated in so-called peacekeeping operations in Senegal and Niger.

These leaked cables substantiate long-held beliefs that Morocco, a former French protectorate, has moved closer to the U.S. Afrol News notes, "Ties with the U.S. have continued to deepen, although Washington is also improving its relations with Morocco's arch-rival Algeria." (Dec. 1)

Regarding U.S. relations with Algeria, another former French colony that won its independence through a protracted armed struggle from 1954 to 1961, Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci objected strongly to placing its nationals on a list of those requiring special screening to enter the U.S. Afrol News reported that according to leaked documents, "The Foreign Minister said that Algeria is a leader in the fight against terrorism and the measures taken by the United States are arbitrary and enshrine the principle of discrimination." (Dec. 1)

Medelci added, "These measures are contrary to Obama's speech in Cairo, and the desire of his administration to work with Muslims." Yet 14 Muslim countries were placed on a watch list after a purported plot to blow up a plane bound for Detroit from Amsterdam on Dec. 25, 2009.

State Department engages in damage control

Since the release of the embassy cables by WikiLeaks in November, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and other diplomats have apologized to U.S. allies around the world, including those on the African continent. Yet what these documents reveal is that it is just as dangerous, if not more so, for African states to be friendly to the U.S. as it is to be considered independent of Washington's foreign policy aims in the region.

Overall U.S. foreign policy toward Africa is designed to maintain and enhance imperialist control over resources integral to the profit-making capacity of transnational corporations. African leaders will undoubtedly take these revelations seriously in their future plans aimed at securing independence and sovereignty of their land, resources and waterways. □

MAX WATTS 1928-2010

He built resistance inside imperialist war machine

By John Catalinotto

Following 82 years of a life filled with adventure and intimately entwined with tumultuous events concerning humanity, Max Watts died in his bed on Nov. 23 in Sydney, Australia, surrounded by friends and comrades.

Watts' contributions were numerous, but his life's central focus was on organizing resistance within the military. This focus he shared with many of us in Workers World Party. We worked together an ocean apart to help GIs break the chain of command within the imperialist U.S. military.

The increase in rank-and-file awareness in the 1960s and 1970s of their own interests and power helped make a mass conscription army unreliable for imposing U.S. rule on Vietnam and intervening elsewhere.

Born Tomi Schwaetzer in Vienna in 1928, Watts and his parents had to flee Nazi-controlled Austria. He traveled through Paris and London before reuniting with his mother in New York. His father had already died. Watts trained as a geophysicist in a New York area college and was active there with the Young Communist League.

Max Watts, at right. PHOTO: OLIVE PORABOU

In 1950, wanting no part of shooting at Koreans, he left the U.S. He wound up in Paris after a stay in Israel, where he also would not serve in the army. As a geophysicist he worked in Algeria, where he did his best to aid the movement of national liberation against French rule, and later in revolutionary Cuba.

He was at the Oct. 17, 1961, demonstration of 30,000 Algerians in Paris, when riot police, under orders to shoot at will, killed hundreds of pro-liberation Algerian-origin demonstrators.

RITA: Resistance inside the army

By 1967, with a half-million U.S. troops in Vietnam and militant youth and Black liberation movements stirring at home, some of the hundreds of thousands of GIs stationed in Europe began to slip away from the U.S. Armed Forces. A few found their way to Paris. And they found Watts.

One was Terry Klug, who wrote in a message to Watts' funeral about how Max had helped these young soldiers cope:

"It's no exaggeration to say that without him, as well as [Watts' partner] June, life would have been unbearable for scores of us during that period. They helped us with places to stay, to find work, with our permits to stay in the country and so much more.

"They introduced us to politics really and helped us give voice to what we were feeling and even doing at the time. A tireless organizer, Max gave us the tools to fight back against the U.S. military and helped us understand it was part of a broader struggle as well."

At that same time, WWP's young activists helped rebellious GIs at Fort Sill, Okla., to organize and eventually call for forming the American Servicemen's Union in December 1967. One of the Fort Sill GIs, Dick Perrin, had wound up in Paris, making the first contact with Watts.

Perrin was responsible for the term, "Resistance inside the army," or RITA, which Watts used as a general term for the wave of GI opposition within many imperialist armies in the 1960s and 1970s. Perrin went into exile in Canada and Klug returned to the U.S., where he faced imprisonment for "desertion." He and his fellow GI prisoners in the Fort Dix, N.J., stockade carried out a rebellion against conditions there.

Tales of resistance

The post-De Gaulle French government expelled Watts from Paris to Corsica in the early 1970s. After evading his watchers, Watts wound up living in Dilsberg, West Germany, near Heidelberg. This put him closer to the 220,000 U.S. GIs stationed in that country. Watts continued to offer aid and assistance to the ever-more-successful and numerous GI organizers throughout the 1970s.

He also kept an historical record of those struggles with his "tales of resis-

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Militant unionists from the Americas meet in Tijuana

WW PHOTOS: CHERYL LABASH

Mike Martinez, Daniel Montes, Ignacio Meneses, Benjamin Prado and Teresa Gutierrez.

By Bob McCubbin and Mike Eilenfeldt
Tijuana, Mexico

For the seventh consecutive year, union leaders, social movement activists and socialists from many countries in the Western Hemisphere came together in this dynamic border city on the first weekend in December for intense discussions. They focused on the global crisis of the imperialist system, its increasing belligerence and its devastating attacks on the living conditions of the international working class.

In the face of this unprecedented crisis, conference speakers discussed fightback strategies, emphasizing the role of labor unions, the building of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA) and unity as important factors in the global struggle for workers' power.

The delegation from Cuba was made up of five women, who detailed the process now underway to realign the Cuban workforce while maintaining the gains of socialism. They also raised projects to increase the unity of workers in the Americas.

Special panels elaborated on the conditions leading to workers' struggle in Mexico, as well as the urgent fight for immigrant rights and May Day demonstrations in the U.S.

The conference adopted an action program that incorporated the Caracas Manifesto of the third Labor Meeting of Our America (ESNA), a proposal for a spring tour in the U.S. of Mexican union leaders and a workers' school in Mexico. It supported the 16th Congress of the World Federation of Trade Unions, to be held in Greece, and the fourth ESNA, to be held in Nicaragua next July 17-19. It also endorsed May Day actions and concrete support to the struggle in Colombia, including a Coca-Cola boycott. Program chairs included Ignacio Meneses and Cheryl LaBash from the U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange and Benjamin Prado from Union del Barrio.

Conference dedicated to freedom for the Cuban Five

Martín López Ortiz, representing the Broad Left Social Front of Michoacán, Mexico, welcomed conference attendees to Mexico and affirmed that the peoples of the world reject the injustices of the U.S. empire, such as the jailing of the Cuban Five, as confirmed at a recent international gathering in Holguín, Cuba. These five Cuban revolutionaries, who have been held prisoners in U.S. penitentiaries since 1998, are hailed worldwide for their efforts to expose anti-Cuban terrorist plots hatched in Miami.

Ailí Labañino Cardoso, the oldest daughter of Cuban Five prisoner Ramón Labañino, described in measured, but emotionally painful terms, the suffering of the Five and their families caused by their isolation and their separation from one another. Olga Salanueva and Adriana Pérez have been denied entry visas by the U.S. to visit their spouses, René González and Gerardo Hernández.

An eye-catching wall display premiered Hernández's political cartoons. Alicia Jrapko, coordinator of the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five, introduced Silvia García Tabío, representing the Cuban National Assembly of People's Power, who discussed legal aspects of the cases of the Five in detail. García urged labor organizations to follow the example of several large Canadian unions that have sent letters to President Barack Obama demanding freedom for the Five. In a media breakthrough, Telemundo interviewed Labañino Cardoso, who also participated in a special lunchtime youth meeting on Saturday.

Global crisis of imperialism: effects and responses

Ermela García Santiago focused on Cuba's revolutionary approach to the problems caused by the present global economic crisis. Cuba is now in the process of making adjustments, beginning with a popular debate on what changes are necessary. The issues are being discussed openly and are displayed on the Internet for anyone interested in the details.

The need for change is prompted by the global economic crisis. Even Cuba is not immune from its negative effects. Cubans know that wealth comes from human labor and growth comes from good planning. Some sectors of the Cuban economy have excessive government subsidies and other sectors harbor excessive numbers of workers. The readjustments are being made over extended periods of time by the workers themselves.

What is indisputable is the support and involvement of the Cuban workers. They understand that these changes will strengthen the revolution and guarantee the basic social security of free education, health care and retirement.

José Humberto Montes de Oca Luna, representing the Mexican Electrical Workers union (SME), characterized the present capitalist crisis as generalized and global. In stark contrast to Cuba, he described the capitalist offensive unleashed against the workers in Mexico and elsewhere. The government has responded to the crisis with increasing efforts to privatize state enterprises. Montes de Oca described in detail the SME struggle against Mexican oligarchic efforts to destroy the union, including legislative and judicial attacks and the jailing of union leaders. The basic fightback strategy must be the class struggle, he emphasized, saying, "We need political independence. We have on our side thousands of retirees, our families and the rally of 70,000 in Aztec Stadium." He urged conference attendees to write letters of support for the SME leadership to the Mexican president and to Mexican legislators. Finally, he called for a Mexican peoples' assembly to demand that Mexico join ALBA.

Bail Out the People Movement leader Larry Holmes received a standing ovation following his presentation analyzing the capitalist crisis. The near collapse of the economic system two years ago, he said, ushered in a new reality on a worldwide basis. Although incredibly productive, the present system is no longer sustainable. Part of our job is to break through the ideological wall that prevents workers from demanding a new system, a system that works in their interests, Holmes urged. Whatever differences groups on the left had in the past, they are probably not important enough to prevent coming together now. The only question should be: Are you ready to fight the system? The workers must come before capital!

ALBA as a growing alternative

Fredy José Franco, general secretary of the Nicaraguan Federation of Teachers of Higher Education, spoke of the fundamental difference between ALBA and the so-called "free trade agreements" pushed by the U.S.

ALBA is based on solidarity among its nation members. Each nation's particular strengths are used to complement the deficiencies of other member nations. He expressed confidence that, following the November 2011 elections, the Sandinista government will be able to deepen the socialist revolution there.

Magaly Batista Enríquez, a representative of the Department of International Relations of the Cuban Workers Central Union (CTC), affirmed that the spirit of ALBA is to share fuel, hydroelectricity and other energy sources, cattle raising, biodiversity, pharmaceuticals, knowledge of pre-Columbian cultures, minerals, help for disabled people, potable water, and so on. Concrete programs have so far included free eye care, literacy campaigns and the training of technicians, doctors and nurses. The popular governments in Latin America are also expanding the use of the sucre as an exchange currency.

Lucy Pagoada, representing the Popular National Resistance Front of Honduras, denounced the recent coup there, citing the connivance of the U.S., the Honduran military and the Catholic Church as well as the national oligarchy. She described it as a coup against ALBA since, in fact, the coup government has withdrawn Honduras from ALBA membership. She pointed out that the biggest military base in Central America is in Honduras and is controlled by the U.S. But the coup, she concluded, has awakened the people to political struggle.

Gilda Chacón Bravo, an international relations representative of the CTC, noted that the 70th anniversary of the World Federation of Trade Unions will be celebrated at its 16th congress next year in Greece. The WFTU is part of ESNA, an annual international gathering promoting unity of action of workers throughout the Americas.

Clarence Thomas, a third-generation longshore worker, organizer of the 2004 Million Worker March and a leader of Local 10 of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, presented two examples of the inherent power of the U.S. working class. Local 10 protested the Israeli slaughter of activists trying to break the genocidal siege of Gaza by joining dockworkers internationally in refusing to unload an Israeli ship. The union also closed down five West Coast ports for eight hours to protest the cold-blooded police killing of Oscar Grant in Oakland.

Other U.S. union panelists and delegations included Rosie Martínez of the SEIU 721 Latino Caucus; Cristina Vásquez, international vice president and regional manager of Workers United; and Martha Grevatt, a Chrysler autoworker.

New York May 1 Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights organizer Teresa Gutierrez highlighted the case of Victor Toro, detained and arrested for lack of documentation and now charged with terrorism for leading opposition to the 1973 fascist coup in Chile orchestrated by the CIA.

She pointed out that although the proposed DREAM Act legislation would offer citizenship to undocumented youth, it would also force many of them into U.S. military service.

Daniel Montes, an organizer for Unión del Barrio in Los Angeles, described the U.S. Southwest as Mexican territory occupied by the U.S. He noted that in the last 30 years, even more Mexicans have migrated to these lands. Today, the Obama administration is deporting more workers than Bush. Unión del Barrio has challenged the Democrats' slogan of "Today we march, tomorrow we vote!" with "Today we march, tomorrow we organize!"

Benjamin Prado of Unión del Barrio in San Diego pointed out that the capitalists have never recognized the rights of the workers. Capitalism turns everything, including people, into merchandise. It's important, he stressed, to unmask the truth that the U.S. is the biggest violator of human rights. We need to learn from the example of ALBA. The problems of immigration have no solution within the context of capitalism.

In addition to alternative media who covered the conference, several Tijuana media representatives, including Telemedia 33 and Radio La Republica, were present. □

WORKERS WORLD editorial

Exposing imperialist diplomacy

The quarter-million U.S. diplomatic cables that are now no longer secret undoubtedly contain enough information to expose the machinery of imperialist foreign policy as a combination of lies, coercion, extortion and war. Other such exposures have occurred historically, some in more favorable circumstances for progressive and working-class organizations.

One of the first things done by the Bolshevik Party, once it took power through a successful workers' revolution in Russia in November 1917, was to publish the secret treaties that the Tsarist regime had signed with its imperialist allies, Britain and France. These treaties showed why the Russian ruling classes were ready to drag the worker and peasant masses into the bloodiest conflict yet: World War I. The treaties said that, in the event of victory, Russia would get the Dardanelles and Constantinople, that is, a warm-water port. The equally imperialist German-Austro-Hungarian-Ottoman alliance had, of course, made its own secret deals with others.

These high-level documents revealed that the massive slaughter of 20 million people in the war arose from imperialist economic and strategic interests. It had nothing to do with fighting for democracy. Spreading the truth about the cynicism of the rulers led to mutinies among the soldiers of both sides and helped bring the war to an end. The truth also strengthened the hand of the new workers' government wherever the Bolsheviks and their allies were capable of getting it published. This included in Britain, where the Manchester Guardian published the documents on Dec. 12, 1917, and in the United States, which had entered the war on the British-French-Russian side that prior April.

The Bolsheviks' exposure of secret diplomacy was a historical lesson for the workers' movement: The lies imperialist politicians use to justify their wars are intended to obscure the strategic and economic interests of the billionaires and bankers who rule capitalist society. This same lesson holds today.

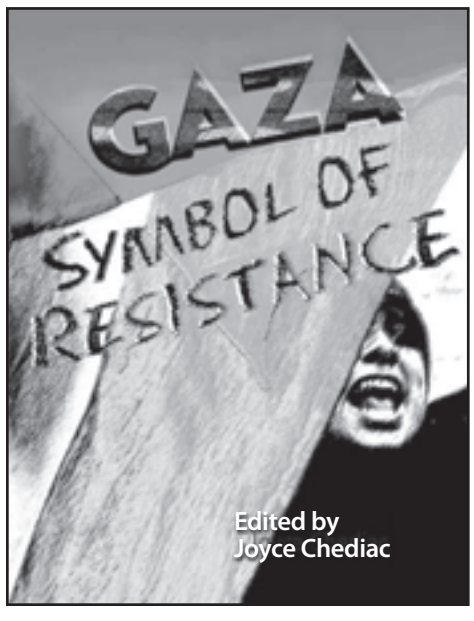
Another major exposure occurred in June 1971. The U.S. had been bombing Vietnam since August 1964. That's when President Lyndon Johnson bludgeoned all but two of the 100 U.S. senators into backing the Tonkin Gulf resolution, using the pretext that North Vietnamese patrol boats had fired on U.S. destroyers. That resolution had authorized the funding of a much wider war.

But by 1971, a determined Vietnamese resistance and a strong popular opposition at home and within the U.S. military convinced many in the U.S. ruling class that continuing the war might lead to an even greater U.S. defeat.

This split in the ruling class led some intellectuals — including Defense Department analyst Daniel Ellsberg, who formerly had supported the war — to photocopy the Pentagon Papers, a high-level assessment of the war on Vietnam. Ellsberg and others released the documents to the New York Times and Washington Post. Those newspapers — by then in tune with the faction in the ruling class that questioned continuing the war — published the revelations, exposing that the Johnson administration had contrived the entire pretext for the escalation.

Exposing this big lie became part of the argument for getting U.S. troops out of Vietnam, which happened in 1973. Vietnam finally fully liberated itself in 1975.

The WikiLeaks documents, on top of earlier revelations about how the government, from the president on down, lied to take the U.S. to war against Iraq and Afghanistan, are further proof that 21st-century U.S. diplomacy, like the U.S. war against Vietnam and imperialist World War I, is still based on lies and coercion. It's up to the progressive, working-class and anti-racist movement to take this one step further and expose the class interests of the tiny few who benefit from war while the masses of people pay the ultimate price. □



The compelling story of how Gazans withstood blockade and bombardment only to stand tall, refusing to give up the right to determine their own lives and to choose their own government; how Gaza's courage inspired a worldwide solidarity movement determined to break the blockade and deliver aid; exposes the forces behind the punishment of Gaza, and how a growing people's media is breaking the mainstream media's information blockade on this event.

This book will be published in December. Every aspect of production — writing, editing, proofreading, cover and book design — were done by voluntary labor.

However, the high cost of printing and binding the book cause us to turn to you for financial support.

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The media and Gaza

'No profits in peace'

WW presents the fifth and last installment of "The media and Gaza," a chapter from an upcoming book on the heroic struggle of the Palestinian people of Gaza who are fighting for self-determination.

Lockheed Martin, with sales in 2008 of $42.7 billion, is the world's largest weapons contractor. It makes the Hellfire precision-guided missile system, reportedly used in Gaza. Israel also has 350 F-16 jets, some purchased from Lockheed Martin. The F-16 is considered the most sought-after fighter plane. Israel's fleet is the largest outside the U.S. (Indymedia Corporate Watch, 2009)

Lockheed Martin has a $4 billion deal to co-produce with the Israeli military a version of the F-16 fighter plane called the Sufa (meaning "storm" in Hebrew). Production begins near Tel Aviv and is finished in Ft. Worth, Texas. (Frida Berrigan)

Lockheed Martin has interlocking directors with the Washington Post and Gannett.

Caterpillar: delivered bulldozer that killed Rachel Corrie

With more than $30 billion in assets, Caterpillar is the world's largest maker of construction equipment. It is one of scores of U.S. companies that are technically not weapons makers but whose products are links in the chain that makes Israeli aggression possible or especially devastating.

Caterpillar makes the D9 military bulldozer, designed for use in invasions of built-up areas. Since 1967, Israel has used these bulldozers to destroy tens of thousands of Palestinian homes and uproot hundreds of thousands of trees. Caterpillar has profited from the construction of the West Bank apartheid separation wall.

The D9 bulldozer was extensively used by Israel in its 2001-2002 Operation Defensive Shield attack, particularly during the invasion of the West Bank town of Jenin, where countless homes were destroyed by bulldozers and a disabled man was crushed to death.

U.S. activist Rachel Corrie was run over and murdered by an Israeli soldier driving a Caterpillar D9 bulldozer in 2003 as she tried to stop it from destroying a Palestinian home in the Rafah refugee camp in Gaza.

Caterpillar interlocks with the Tribune Company, owner of the Chicago Tribune and the Los Angeles Times.

Raytheon: No profits in peace

Raytheon, with annual revenues of $20 billion, supplies electronic equipment for the West Bank apartheid wall. Since 1998 Raytheon has sold Israel more than 200 AIM-120 advanced, medium-range, air-to-air missiles at a total cost of more than $100 million, as well as 14 Beech King B200 fixed-wing aircraft for $125 million and a Patriot missile system for $73 million, according to the Federation of American Scientists.

Raytheon made the 100 bunker-buster bombs flown by the U.S. to Israel at the height of the bombardment of Lebanon in 2006. (Counterpunch, May 28, 2008) These weapons were also used in Gaza.

This company makes the Tomahawk missile, the Sidewinder and other high-tech missiles that Israel has in its arsenal. These missiles have very sophisticated, heat-seeking targeting components that interface with GPS. (Frida Berrigan)

Raytheon is jointly marketing one of these missiles, the Black Sparrow ballistic target missile, with the Israeli weapons-maker Rafael. Raytheon's program manager for this project, Adam Cherrill, actually advocates further expansion of "Greater Israel" and believes Israel has "a far stronger claim to Judea and Samaria, which is considered the West Bank, than the Arabs." (Counterpunch, Feb. 11, 2003)

This might seem like Cherrill has been "unduly influenced" by Israel. The wars against Arabs that follow from this view, however, would bring billions in profits to Raytheon. After all, weapons are made to be destroyed and then to be ordered again. For weapons makers, there are no profits to be made in peace.

Raytheon has an interlocking director with the New York Times.

The media have developed selective amnesia when it comes to the Palestinian people because, like all corporations, they are drawn to greater profits like a moth to the flame. U.S. companies make the profits when Israel makes the kill.

The corporate media are in on the killing. They use their vast communication fleets to bombard the population here with fiction that confuses people and disarms them politically. By finding ways to justify Israeli aggression, they help pave the way politically for the next Israeli attack on Palestinians.

Media-industrial-military behemoth has soft underbelly

But this corporate media empire cannot fool all the people all the time. Its weak underbelly is that it underestimates the power of a people united and determined to resist. All the weapons in the U.S. arsenal couldn't bomb Gaza into submission. Gaza still stands strong, and its resistance has inspired solidarity from millions of people. Many of these people are also fighting for their own rights, often against the very same corporations that profit from Gaza's anguish.

Another weakness of the corporate media is that the World Wide Web and other forms of instant communication they dominate can be used by the Palestinian people and those in solidarity with their struggle. Through online blogs, posting photos and YouTube videos, Facebook, Twitter, e-mails and texting, activists have provided instant coverage of their solidarity trips, their reception in different countries and the conditions in Gaza.

Palestinians from the Occupied Territories have spoken directly to U.S. demonstrations via satellite cell phones. Freedom Flotilla videographers have posted their footage of the Israeli commando raid on the web.

There is a people's media that is breaking the ABC, CBS, NBC and FOX blockade of the truth. They will not be stopped. □

Max Watts

Continued from page 8

tance days," which he called "TORDS." In collaboration with ex-GI David Cortright, he wrote a retrospective on the GI organizing experience in the book "Left Face."

Watts resettled in Australia in 1981 and actively supported many struggles of Indigenous peoples in that area of the world — in Australia, East Timor, Papua New Guinea and especially Bougainville, where a local 10-year uprising kept the mining monopoly Rio Tinto from pillaging the environment. Watts insisted the Bougainville story was the basis for the movie "Avatar."

A few weeks before he died, Watts wrote the following solidarity statement to the

Continued on page 11

With most popular party excluded Haitians protest imposed 'elections'

By G. Dunkel

Hundreds of thousands of Haitians still live under tarps and tents because their houses were destroyed in the Jan. 12 earthquake. Hundreds are dying every week from an epidemic of cholera caused by lack of access to clean water. Haiti is still occupied by Minustah, the U.N.'s armed force for the "stabilization" of this impoverished country.

So the "international community" — mostly the United States and its very junior partner France — decided this was a good time to hold elections for president, Haiti's lower house and about a third of its Senate.

But the most popular party in Haiti, Fanmi Lavalas, was barred from running candidates.

The U.N.'s chief political officer in Haiti, Edmund Mulet, said the "elections were peaceable" with some "minor incidents," and threatened to call out Minustah if protests continued. The New York Times said on Dec. 1 that the "elections in Haiti were sullied" but "fundamentally sound." The general consensus in the U.S. State Department, the United Nations, the Organization of American States and CARICOM (Caribbean states) followed Mulet and the New York Times.

The Haitian people had a completely different reaction and held massive protests. They were outraged at the way the elections were held, especially the exclusion of parties by the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP).

"Frauds, Lies, Challenges and Betrayals" read the headline in one Haitian weekly. "A National Farce" read another headline, over a picture of a ballot box dumped in an open sewer. (Closed sewers don't exist in Haiti.)

Voters couldn't find their precinct or their names weren't on the voting list. Even presidential candidates had to cast provisional ballots because they weren't listed. Voting offices opened late or closed early. Some had 50 ballots for 5,000 voters. In some balloting offices, only President René Préval's ruling party was allowed to observe the vote and count; in others, the ballot boxes were filled before voting began.

The general impression of election observers was that voter turnout was less than 20 percent. The preliminary vote totals won't be reported until Dec. 7.

On the afternoon of election day, 12 presidential candidates held a joint news conference to demand that the elections be annulled because of massive and pervasive fraud and misconduct. Two of them, Mirlande Manigat and Michel "Sweet Mickey" Martelly, backed off from this demand a day later, both having been told by the U.N. that they were leading in the "count." (Al Jazeera TV, Dec. 2) The other 10 took part in massive street demonstrations and denounced the elections as "tricks, filled with shenanigans, not expressing the will of the people." (video, Haiti Press Network, hpnhaiti.com.)

One very telling criticism of the election came from Jacques Edouard Alexis, a presidential candidate who had served twice as President René Préval's prime minister. He said, "The election is ruined. It needs to be canceled."

Thousands demonstrate against 'selections'

Thousands of people have come out into the streets every day since the election, overturning garbage dumpsters and setting up blockades of burning tires, making it difficult for Minustah to use its armored personnel carriers. They are not just supporting one or another bourgeois candidate. They are demanding true elections, "not selections." They are protesting the undemocratic structure of the elections themselves, not just the undemocratic way in which they were conducted.

They demand the opportunity to vote for President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's Fanmi Lavalas party, which the CEP ruled off the ballot. It was the U.S. that forced Aristide, Haiti's first democratically elected president, into exile in 2004. Every time his party has been allowed to run in elections since then, it has won. A successful Lavalas candidate would lead a popular resistance to the U.S. neocolonial policies imposed on Haiti.

Aristide explained in an interview with filmmaker Nicolas Rossier, which appeared in the newspaper Haïti-Liberté in early November: "They are not planning to have free and fair democratic elections. They are planning to have a selection. They excluded the Lavalas party, which is the party of the majority."

Cuban medics vs. cholera

Along with the elections and their manipulations, the cholera epidemic is another major issue. Most Haitians believe it was introduced in mid-October by Minustah troops, since, despite poor sanitation, there had been no cholera in Haiti for generations. Because these same armed forces protected the fraudulent election apparatus, a very popular slogan has been "U.N. and cholera out of Haiti."

Columnist Robert Buddan pointed out in a Jamaican newspaper: "One great irony is that Cuba, criticized for not having 'competitive' elections, has really been putting people first in Haiti. At the end of the day, that is what the people of Haiti want right now. Almost 40 percent of the sick have been looked after by the Cuban medical brigade. At their rate of treatment, only 700 persons would have died, not 2,000, and as many as 70,000 would not have been infected. While the United States was the top funder of elections, Cuba is the top savior for cholera-stricken Haitians." (The Gleaner, Dec. 5)

Cuba has just sent 300 additional medical personnel to Haiti from its Henry Reeve Brigade. It appears that the threat from cholera has increased dramatically, given that clean water and latrines are available for only a small minority of the Haitian people, certainly not for the 1.5 million still living under tarps or in tents. □

WW forum hits war 'games' in Korea

New York — Hyun Lee, an organizer from Nodutdol for Korean Community Development and the National Campaign to End the Korean War, was a guest speaker at a Workers World Party forum here on Dec. 3. She provided facts and analysis on the latest crisis on the Korean Peninsula. Lee spoke on the provocative war "games" carried out by tens of thousands of U.S. and south Korean troops that targeted the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the north. She also spoke on the historic role of the U.S. military in this region since the 1950-1953 Korean War. To this day, the U.S. has refused to sign a peace treaty with the DPRK.

Deirdre Griswold

Hyun Lee

Deirdre Griswold, Workers World editor, spoke on how this ongoing imperialist aggression against the sovereignty of the DPRK impacts workers in both Korea and the United States. In this era of the global capitalist labor market, the DPRK's biggest "crime" is that it has chosen a socialist path of development that keeps transnational corporations from super-exploiting the workers there. She also spoke on her own experiences of visiting Korea, north and south. To hear Lee's and Griswold's remarks, go to workers.tv.

The forum followed a street rally near busy Herald Square, organized by the International Action Center, where thousands of shoppers got to hear and see slogans like "Jobs, not war in Korea" and "Sign the peace treaty NOW!"

— Report & photos by Monica Moorehead

He built resistance inside imperialist war machine

WWP national conference:

"We — of the then-just-born Paris-based group RITA ACT — far from the USA — had never heard of the Workers World Party — until Private Dick Perrin arrived from the U.S. Army in Germany and told us of the, yes, the correct word is "heroic" assistance he and the other resister GIs received from your members, in the first attempts at organizing inside Fort Sill, Okla.

"The WWP was the first, and for a while the only, U.S. organization able and willing to help these GIs take on the Green Machine, most effectively, and eventually build the American Servicemen's Union. We shall never forget!"

We in WWP will remember Watts' contribution to the GI movement and his insistence on working cooperatively with all forces that contributed to that struggle.

Catalinotto communicated regularly with Watts by phone, mail, email and a few face-to-face meetings between 1967 and a final phone call on Nov. 21.

Praise for analysis of 'Low-Wage Capitalism'

By Deirdre Griswold

Fred Goldstein's book "Low-Wage Capitalism — What the new globalized high-tech imperialism means for the class struggle in the U.S." is getting more attention the deeper the capitalist crisis bites.

Published more than a year ago, the book describes and analyzes the processes that today are even more rapidly forcing down the workers' standard of living and creating political crises around the globe.

A review of the book by author and historian Greg Elich appeared in the October issue of Science and Society magazine. Elich finds that while the economic crisis has produced "a spate of articles and books" that attempt to explain it, "few have done so from an explicitly Marxist perspective. 'Low-Wage Capitalism' does more than merely fill that gap, it provides a deeply considered analysis written with verve and clarity."

Elich summarizes some of the book's main points: "The first section of the book addresses economic globalization, in which 'transnational corporations are able to pit workers in the rich, developed imperialist countries in a direct job-for-job wage competition with workers in poor, underdeveloped, low-wage countries on an ever-widening scale.'"

Further summarizing Goldstein's work, Elich says: "With the demise of the Soviet Union and East European socialism, the opening of China to foreign capital and the ceding by India of control over its economy to the dictates of the IMF and World Bank, global capitalism has vastly increased the global pool of labor. Technological developments over that same period of time have made the exploitation of this expanded labor force feasible." So that in a historically short period of time, from 1985 to 2000, "the number of workers worldwide available to the transnational corporations for exploitation more than doubled."

He adds that the last section of the book not only reviews labor stratagems of the past but points to ways the struggle can go forward.

There is much more of interest in the review. He sums the book up this way:

"The product of years of research, 'Low-Wage Capitalism' addresses far too many topics to mention in a brief review. Taken on their own, any one of the themes covered in 'Low-Wage Capitalism' may not be particularly unique. But what is quite special about this book is having all of this material in a single source, so well analyzed and integrated, sharply analyzed, backed by extensive research and written in an engaging style. I know of no other book that covers our current economic predicament so well and in such an interesting manner."

Goldstein's work has recently won great praise in another quarter. The Portuguese online daily odiario.info translated and published a document he wrote for the recent National Conference of Workers World Party analyzing the current stage of the economic crisis. Miguel Urbano, who edited the mass daily O Diario for a decade, wrote: "Fred Goldstein's article, which we are publishing today in Odiario, is an essay of the highest level. The best that I know of about the crisis."

Urbano was editor of the Portuguese Communist Party's weekly, Avante in 1974-75, after being earlier exiled to Brazil during the years of the Salazar dictatorship in Portugal.

For more information about Goldstein's book, see lowwagecapitalism.com. Copies can be ordered at leftbooks.com. □

MUNDO OBRERO

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Revolucionario chileno exige asilo político

Por Teresa Gutierrez

La lucha para exigir el asilo político para el revolucionario chileno Víctor Toro continúa. Toro, que es indocumentado, fue perfilado racialmente en julio de 2007 por agentes de inmigración en un tren de Amtrak en el estado de Nueva York. Su juicio estaba pautado para el 6 de diciembre en la Corte Federal en la Ciudad de Nueva York.

Luego del juicio, el Movimiento de la Peña del Bronx envió un comunicado donde decía: "Después de una larga sesión y preguntas al doctor que fue testigo de Víctor Toro, la jueza dio por terminado el proceso y comunicó que: el abogado Carlos Moreno tendrá 30 días para escribir las razones por las cuales Víctor Toro debiera ser favorecido con el asilo político; el fiscal y abogados del gobierno también deberán en un plazo de 30 días, escribir las razones por las cuales Víctor Toro no debe ser favorecido por el asilo político; que este juicio llegó a su fin y que la Jueza en el mes de abril del 2011 comunicará por escrito su decisión final".

Víctor Toro fue líder y fundador del MIR, Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria en Chile. El MIR es muy conocido y respetado por los/as revolucionarios/as de todo el mundo pues condujo una extraordinaria lucha revolucionaria en Chile, particularmente a principios de los años 70.

Durante ese tiempo, un golpe fascista orquestado por EEUU masacró millares de chilenos/as. Generales derechistas derrocaron el gobierno pro-socialista del presidente Salvador Allende. Días después del derrocamiento de Allende, EEUU instaló un régimen marioneta dirigido por el general Augusto Pinochet. El 11 de septiembre de 1973, Allende fue asesinado.

Este tiempo sangriento será recordado por siempre no sólo por el pueblo chileno sino también por todos/as los/as antiimperialistas y revolucionarios/as de todo el mundo. Decenas de miles fueron golpeados/as, torturados/as, mutilados/as y asesinados/as durante el régimen de Pinochet.

Fue también una época de lucha heroica cuando los/as trabajadores/as chilenos/as, campesinos/as, mujeres y todos los sectores de la clase obrera pusieron una resistencia militante y audaz, resistencia que no ha desaparecido hasta estos días.

Victor Toro

FOTO: LA COALICIÓN PRIMERO DE MAYO

Un caso contra el imperialismo

La continua resistencia en Chile es la razón del porqué Toro no se está enjuiciando solamente por su estado inmigratorio.

El departamento de justicia decidió hace meses convertir este caso en uno contra el movimiento chileno, y por extensión, contra el movimiento latinoamericano. El gobierno estadounidense siniestramente trajo a colación la afiliación política de Toro con el MIR, decidiendo someter a juicio tanto al MIR como a Toro.

Toro sin embargo, tomó esto no como un revés sino como una oportunidad para exponer al imperialismo estadounidense y su papel en el golpe sangriento de 1973.

El gobierno de EEUU sometió documentos a la corte donde se nombraba repetidamente a Toro como líder principal del MIR difamándolo como un "extremista peligroso". Al aseverar que el MIR es una organización terrorista, el caso de Toro se sale del plano de la ley de inmigración para llevarlo a la llamada "guerra contra el terror".

Carlos Moreno, abogado de Toro, argumenta que gran parte del régimen de Pinochet todavía permanece en Chile y la deportación podría conducir al asesinato de su cliente. Él dice que será difícil que un juez de inmigración contradiga los cargos de "terrorismo" y conceda a Toro el asilo político.

Toro continúa poniendo énfasis en que su caso no es sobre él individualmente sino que es un caso para documentar el papel de EEUU en Chile y la presencia de 14 millones de inmigrantes indocumentados/as en los EEUU.

En la audiencia de Toro en octubre, su esposa Nieves Ayres y su hija Rosita, atestiguaron. Ayres es también líder, organizadora y cofundadora de la Peña del Bronx; ella es una veterana activista comunitaria e importante representante de la Coalición Primero de Mayo pro derechos de los trabajadores e inmigrantes. Ella también fue víctima de tortura fascista durante el régimen de Pinochet.

Toro dijo a Workers World/Mundo Obrero el 23 de noviembre que en la audiencia del 6 de diciembre su abogado defensor continuará trayendo a colación procesos políticos tales como la Operación Cóndor. Esta era una red de agentes de policía secreta aterrorizantes patrocinada por los EEUU que funcionaba en el cono sur latinoamericano en los años 70 y coordinaba ataques espantosos contra las fuerzas de izquierda y de la clase obrera.

La audiencia también incluía testimonios de prominentes académicos tales como el profesor Peter Winn, profesor de historia de la Universidad Tufts, especializado en América Latina y en Chile en particular. Según el abogado de Toro, el testimonio de Winn es significativo porque él ha viajado extensamente por Chile y es autor de varios libros sobre ese país. Él se esperaba que atestiguara sobre cómo las alegaciones de que el MIR es una organización terrorista están lejos de la verdad.

Chile hoy

El caso de Toro es tan relevante a los procesos en el Chile de hoy como lo fue en los años 70.

El movimiento y las condiciones en Chile han ascendido y han llegado a las noticias internacionales este año. El terremoto en febrero; el caso de los 33 mineros de cobre atrapados; la lucha de los/as Mapuches y las huelgas de hambre actuales de las mujeres y de los mineros son ejemplos de un creciente fervor revolucionario en Chile.

"Todas las fuerzas de clase están en movimiento: estudiantes, mujeres, trabajadores, campesinos, indígenas, están organizándose y movilizándose" dijo Toro.

Recientemente 33 mujeres ocuparon la mina de Chiftón del Diablo para exigir el restablecimiento de un programa de emergencia de trabajos que había sido lanzado después del terremoto de febrero. Más de 8.000 trabajadores/as quedaron desempleados/as, lo que ocurrió luego de la eliminación de otras 9.500 posiciones temporales.

Otra lucha que está surgiendo en otra mina en Chile, la mina de Collahuasi, es otro ejemplo de la amenaza que los/as trabajadores/as chilenos/as representan para los intereses capitalistas.

WW/MO le preguntó a Toro acerca del MIR en la actualidad. Él dijo que desgraciadamente el MIR tiene muchas facciones pero que él apoya todos. Toro tiene la confianza de que el MIR evolucionará y se convertirá en la organización principal que ayudará a conducir la clase obrera a la victoria final en Chile.

Una declaración en el 45to aniversario de la fundación del MIR en agosto de este año titulada "Con experiencia, con la juventud, con fuerza y con unidad," dice en parte: "A los trabajadores y al pueblo de Chile ... a los presos políticos Mapuche en huelga de hambre ... Nuestra historia no es más que la historia de un pueblo que aún lucha por su liberación. Nuestra organización al igual que nuestro pueblo, ha pasado por grandes etapas de lucha y resistencia, ha sido golpeada en lo más alto de su estructura y en lo más amplio de su organización. Nuestro MIR ha teñido de sangre joven y valiente las calles de nuestros pueblos en la lucha por la emancipación de los desposeídos, la construcción del poder popular y la lucha por el socialismo, lucha que aún no acaba y que hoy llena nuestros corazones de sueños al igual que ayer".

Toro y Ayres están en lo correcto en convertir el juicio de Toro en uno sobre el imperialismo de EEUU. Es otro valiente acto de resistencia por revolucionarios chilenos/as que han hecho frente al brazo represivo del imperialismo y no han cejado ni retrocedido.

El movimiento progresista en los EEUU debe continuar exigiendo el asilo político para Víctor Toro y el cese de la agresión imperialista contra el MIR. ¡Viva la lucha en Chile! □

LIBERTAD PARA LOS CINCO CUBANOS

¿Quiénes son los Cinco Cubanos? Los Cinco Cubanos están cumpliendo largas e injustas sentencias en prisiones de EEUU por defender a su patria – Cuba – de grupos terroristas del exilio Cubano en Miami. Los Cinco Cubanos fueron arrestados en 1998 por monitorear las actividades de esos grupos violentos e informar a Cuba sobre sus planes. Por casi 12 años, estos cinco hombres han permanecido en prisiones de EEUU y como un castigo adicional, a dos de ellos se les ha negado el derecho humano básico de recibir visitas de sus esposas. Únase a personas de todas partes del mundo – parlamentarios, Premios Nobel, sindicalistas, activistas comunitarios – que se han pronunciado contra el injusto encarcelamiento de los Cinco Cubanos y continúan demandado su libertad. Para más información visite: www.thecuban5.org

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